

JOHN HART, D.D.



1 Pet. 1. 24, 25. All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man is as the flower of grass: the grass withereth, & the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.

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Christ's First

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SERMON.

O R,

The absolute Necessity, Gospel Duty,
and Christian Practice of Repentance, O-
pened and Applyed, by a godly able and
faithful Minister of Jesus Christ.

Wherein is Discovered what Repentance
is, and also the great Necessity thereof to Sal-
vation: with the great folly and desperate
madness of all those that delay and put off
Repentance unto a Sick-Bed, or Old-Age.

Together with the great Benefit, Joy and Com-
fort that shall be to the Souls of all those that truly
and truly Repent.

The Sixteenth Edition, with many Additions.

Mat. 4. 17.

From that time Jesus began to Preach and to say,
Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

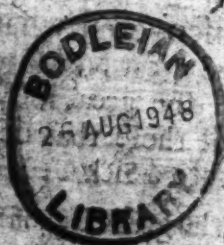
Luke 13. 3.

Except ye Repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

London, Printed by J. G. for W. Chiswell,
and T. PaWinger.

Christ's Light

GERMON



CHRIST'S First Sermon:

O. R.

The absolute Necessity, Duty and Christi-
an Practice of Repentance.

Act 17. 30, 31. The times of this Ignorance
God winked at, but now commandeth all men
every where to repent: Because he hath ap-
pointed a Day, in which he will judge the
World in Righteousness.

The Blessed Apostle Saint Paul, in these
Words, Beloved, endeavours to take off
the Superstitious Athenians from their
Idolatry and Worshipping of false Gods,
Gods of Silver and Gold, which indeed are no
Gods; but the works of Mens Hands: And then
he doth, first by endeavouring to convince them of
the folly of their Idolatry; and then secondly, in
laying before them the power and goodness of God,

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in making and preserving the World, and all things therein. God saith he, in the foregoing verses made the World and all things therein, and is Lord over all, and gives to all life and breath, and all things; and in him we all live and move, and have our being; and it is he that hath set the bounds of our Habitations. Therefore (saith he) you need not to think that the God-head is like unto Gold or Silver, or Stones, graven by Art, or Mans device; for God is Lord both of Heaven and Earth, I, but these Idolaters (like some now a days) we did as our fore-fathers did, they worshipped such gods as these, and we are of the same Religion as our fore-fathers were. But, saith the Apostle, this was done in Ignorance, and the time of this Ignorance God winked at: your fore-fathers had not the light of the Gospel, they never heard of Jesus Christ: But now (saith he) Christ is preached, and the light of the Gospel shines forth into the World, therefore now ye must repent and turn from these Idols and serve the living God. Now God commands all men every where to repent, although God in times past suffered all Nations to walk in their own ways: Now hath he sent us to Preach Christ unto you, that you should turn from these Vanities, and serve the living God. If your fore-fathers sinned, it was through their Ignorance and want of know-

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Knowledge of Jesus Christ: but if you sin and go on in your Iniquity, it is through wilfulness, and God will be revenged on you. In the wayes you may observe these four things. First, a Duty Commanded; and that is Repentance. Secondly, the Commander, and that is God: God Commandeth. Thirdly, the persons to whom this Command is enjoyned, and that is all Men, every where, high and low, rich and poor; all the World over. Fourthly, and Lastly, the time when, and that is now; now God commandeth all men, every where to Repent; now, in these times of the Gospel: To day if you will hear my voice, saith God, in Pla. 95. 7. From the Words thus opened, I shall give you these four Practical Observations. The first is this, That Repentance is a needful and necessary Duty commanded by God. Secondly, That every Man and Woman in the World is bound to Repent. Thirdly, That the Doctrine of the Gospel is a Doctrine of repentance. It was Christs first Sermon, as you may see, Mat. 4. 17. Jesus began to preach and to say repent. Fourthly, and lastly, Observe from these Words That God expects more and looks for more from Men under the Gospel, than from those who never heard of the Gospel. These four Observations are all of them very clear, from the Words of the Text, I shall only therefore give you some few further proofs of them from Scripture, and

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so proceed in the opening and handling of the first Observations; and from thence I shall draw sundry Practical Uses, which I shall endeavour, by Gods assistance, to apply home unto your Souls. I shall therefore joyn the two first Observations in one entice Proposition, thus; That Repentance is a needful and necessary Duty, commanded by God; and that every Man and Woman in the World is bound to repent. Exept ye Repent (saith Christ, Luke 13. 3.) ye shall all Perish. And 2 Pet. 3. 9. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance. As I live saith the Lord, Ezek. 33. 11. I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye dye O house of Israel. And in Mat. 3. 2. Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. And so likewise in Acts 2. 38. Repent and be Baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. Repentance is needful for all, there are none so wise, none so learned, none so holy, but stand in need of Repentance. In many things (saith St. James) we sin all; Jam. 3. 2. And in Rom. 23. All have sinned. Young ones have sinned, and therefore have need to repent, and that betimes, lest as St. Paul saith, Heb. 3. 12. Through the deceitfulness of Sin, their Hearts be hardened. Its good for young ones; yea it is

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the best course they can take, as Solomon saith,
Eccles. 12. 1. To remember their Creator in
the days of their Youth; and not to put off Re-
pentance unto old Age, or the Death-bed, for then
it may be too late: For a'though true Repentance
is never too late, yet late Repentance is seldom
true. It is a good Obse. variation of a Holy Man:
said he, speaking of the Repentant Thief. God
saved one at the last hour that none might Dis-
pair, and but one, that none might Presume:
Thou that wilt not repent when thou maist, it may
be God will not give thee time to repent hereafter,
when thou wouldest: Dost thou think to do that
in thy old Age, which thou wilt not do in thy
youth? Canst thou do that in one hour on thy
Death-bed, which thou art not able to do sufficiently
all thy life-time? And then likewise old Men
have need of Repentance, they have lived a long
time in Sin, and have long enough, yea, too too
long neglected Repentance: young men may dye
soon but Old men cannot live long; therefore both
young and Old have need to Repent, that they may
receive the remission of their sins, Mark. 1. 4. And
for your better understanding of this great and ne-
cessary Duty of Repentance, I shall a little shew
you what it is, and that briefly. Repentance is of
two sorts; either real or unfeigned, or else seem-
ing and hypocritical: seeming Repentance that is
common to wicked men, and is altogether Il-
gal

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gal arising from the accusations of their own Consciences, such a Repentance as this, was that of Judas; and then there is a real and unfeigned Repentance, which doth properly belong to the Gospel; and this is likewise of two sorts: Legal and Evangelical. Legal Repentance that comes from the Law, giving us the sight of our sins and our misery by sin, the Law is our School-master to bring us to Christ. Gal. 3. 24. But Evangelical Repentance, that springs from faith in Christ, and carries out the soul unto Christ, in opposition to every sin: and to forsaking of every evil way: Repentance then I shall thus describe: I say Repentance is a gift of God, by which a Believing Sinner being cast down in the sight and sense of his own sins, doth utterly forsake and abhor all his former ways, and turns to the Lord with a perfect heart.

I say. It is a Gift of God, that which comes from God and not from Nature, its a flower which grew in Natures Garden, neither Birth nor Breeding, neither Art nor Learning, nor any other sublunary power or qualification, is able to bring forth Repentance; true Repentance comes from above. Every good and perfect Gift (saith St. James) cometh from above, Jam. 1. 17. It doth not grow here below, but comes down from the Father of Lights. The Apostles, Act

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11. 16. glorified God, that to the Gentiles he had granted Repentance unto Life. Repentance is the quickning of a dead Soul, and therefore must be the Act of him who is the giver of all Life. We are all of us by Nature dead in sins and trespasses, Ephes. the 2. and 1. A Man by nature is no more able to perform an act of true Grace, than a dead person in the Grave is able to do an act of nature. They that live in sin (as St. Paul saith of the Willow that lives in pleasure, 1 Tim. 3. 6.) are dead while they live. Repentance then is the gift of God. Acts 11. 18. God granted Repentance unto life. So in 1 Tim. 2. 25. the Ministers of God are required to instruct those that oppose themselves with meekness; if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth, that they may recover themselves out of the Snarles of the Devil. It is said of Christ, Acts 5. 31. He is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance unto Israel. Faith and Repentance are supernatural Works: and we may as well create new Heavens and a new Earth, as do these acts of our selves, it is God alone that works them in our Hearts, by the efficacious operations of his Spirit, 2 Cor. 5. 5. We are not sufficient of our selves, to think any thing as of our selves, but it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do, of his good pleasure, Phil. 2. 13.

Secondly,

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Secondly, Repentance is a change, first of Heart, then of the whole Man: there must be a new Heart and a new Man, a new Life and a new Head: all things must be new where Repentance is. If any man be in Christ (saith Apoule, he is a new Creature, 1 Cor. 5. 17. Repentance makes a Man a new Man, and it is in the power of God to renew our Hearts, neither Angels nor Men are able to do it, Jer. 31. 18, 19. saith Ephraim, Turn thou and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord God; Surely after that I was turned I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my Youth. This is the Character of a true Repentant it is the Lord that must change our Hearts, it is he only that can give us new Hearts and take from us these hearts of stone: it is the Lord that must pluck us from the Snares of the Devil, and call down the strong holds of Sin in us; if God do not turn us we never be turned. After that I was turned, I repented, saith Ephraim. But I proceed to the Description of Repentance.

It is a gift of God, I say, whereby a believing Sinner turns from all his sins unto God: It is a believing Sinner, because Faith must first precede and go before Repentance, for none can truly Repent, but he must first Believe: there

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in a Sinner that which we call Legal Repen-
tance which may cause a Sinner to fight with
his sin, and it may be to loath them with a kind
of detestation: it is possible a wicked man may re-
pent that ever he knew what sin meant, or that ever
he had to do with sin; all this may be, and yet no
true Repentance because no true faith; for true
Repentance causes a hatred of sin, as it is displeas-
ing to God, as well as hurtful to our selves, yea,
he hates sin as hell, yea, worse than hell it self,
which cannot be in an unbelieving Soul. It can-
not be denied but that Repentance is a saving
Grace, and if so, then none can partake of this sa-
ving Grace, till he first be united unto Christ, the
fountain of all Grace: so then faith must needs be
before Repentance.

Secondly, where true Repentance is, there is
a change wrought in the whole Man, and a turn-
ing, first, to our selves; secondly to God; and
thirdly to Man. An unrepentant Sinner is out
of himself, and he is not only out of his way,
but out of his Wits. In Luke 15. 17. when the
Prodigal came to himself, he said, Father I have
sinned: this is the first step to repentance, self-
returning. Secondly Repentance is a returning
to God. If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the
Lord; return unto me, Jer. 4. 1. The Grace of
Repentance is suitably expressed by this act of re-
turning to God, and they who did not repent,
are

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are said to return to God. In Amos 4. 1. **G**od saith, Notwithstanding I have given you cleanness of teeth, & want of bread, yet have you not returned; notwithstanding I have withholden rain from you and smitten you with blasting and mildew, and sent among you the pestilence. Notwithstanding I have slain your young men by the sword, and overthrown some of you as he overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah by fire, yet have you not returned unto me saith the Lord. Repentance is a turning from sin to God? Sin turns men from God, and draws the Soul into the ways of death, Jam. 1. 14. A man is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed; drawn away from God and from the truth of God; but when Repentance comes, he turns back again, he changes his mind then, and abhors himself for what he hath done, Job 42. 6. I abhor my self and repent (saith Job) in dust and ashes. The Prodigal was drawn away from his fathers house through his own Lusts, and yet at last he returned first to himself, secondly to his Father, Luke 15. 17. When he came to himself he said, I will arise and go to my Father, and say unto him, Father I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am now more worthy to be called thy Son.

Sinners are said to be mad, but Repentance brings Men to their right wits again: the impenitent Sinner is a mad Man, a meer

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Man; who but a mad Man will run himself
willfully into the fire, as every wicked Man
doth; he runs headlong to Destruction; but
Repentance turns men from this madness. In
Acts 16. 18. It is called, A turning of Men from
darkness to light, and from the power of Satan
unto God, & in is a darkness, and when Men sin
they know not what they do, but Repentance
enlightens Men, and lets them at liberty. In
Acts 20. 20. Repentance and turning to God are
put together, they are one and the same, the one
cannot be without the other; but it is not any
turning that doth this, but it is a turning of the
judgment, and a turning of the will and affec-
tions: so that Men that are turned are carried
wholly from sin and wickedness unto God, Joel
2. 12. Turn unto me (saith God) with all your
Heart: If it be with a piece, it is nothing worth,
it is altogether detestful.

Thirdly, Repentance is a returning to Men;
we must not be ashamed to acknowledge our
sins one to another, James 5. 16. Confess your
faults one to another, and pray one for another.
If we have done any Man wrong, we ought to ac-
knowledge it. It is so then that Repentance
flows from faith in Jesus Christ: and turning
Men from sin unto God, then I observe, that
there are many in the World, who as yet never
knew what true Repentance meaneth; because
they

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they are yet in Unbelief and without Faith, without which there can be no Repentance: They may cry bitterly, and humble themselves in sackcloth and ashes, as Ahab did: When they have the horrors of Hell in their Conscience, as Judas had: When they Reform many things that are amiss, as Herod did, and yet being Unbelievers, they are still in the state of impenitency. It is an Infalible Demonstration, That they never yet truly tasted the Love of God, in the pardon of their sins, who dare presume to take liberty to sin, or delight themselves in any sin whatsoever: they that truly believe cannot, dare not allow themselves in any sin: for as Faith purifies the Heart, so Faith and Repentance keeps the Heart pure, and makes the Conscience tender: and the more pure the Heart is, the more will it abhor from all things that are evil.

Then secondly, is Repentance the gift of grace of God, whereby a believing Sinner being humbled under the sight and sense of his sin, doth truly return to God? Then we may observe That where true Repentance is, there is also humiliation for sin. It is not possible that every soul should truly Repent, that is not humbled and cast down in the sight and sense of his sins. Turn unto me (saith the Lord) with your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning, Joel 2. 12. The Ninevites when

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Repented, they humbled themselves from the highest to the lowest; and this also shewes us, that the greatest part of Men and Women in the World never yet truly Repented; because they were never yet truly humbled: It is not every kind of sorrow that works Repentance, but as it is in 2 Cor. 7. 10. only godly sorrow worketh repentance never to be repented of. And as there may be a counterfeit Repentance, so there may be a counterfeit Humiliation: The signs and marks of true humiliation are these. First, the Soul that is truly humbled for sin, is very free in confession of sin; and the Scriptures tell us, that those that have been most humbled for sin, have been the freest in confession of their sins, David, Nehemiah, Job, and others; Psal. 51. 3. saith David, I acknowledge my transgression, and my sins are ever before me. And this confession of sin will be in some measure suitable to our humiliation; if our sorrow for sin be sincere, our confession will be so too; therefore all those who are less afraid to commit sin than they are ashamed to confess sin, were never yet truly humbled for sin, neither shall their Souls reap any benefit by it. Prov. 28. 13. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy. They that will not find out their sins to confess them, to be free one day or other their sins shall find them

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out to torment them : If Sin find us not out in Youth, it will find us out in Age ; if it find us not out in health, yet it will find us out in sickness : if it find us not out in Life, yet it will find us out in Death : if it find us not out in Death, yet it will find us out after Death, in the day of Judgment : either one time or other our Sins will find us out, Numb. 25. 33. Your Sins (saith God) shall find you out.

Secondly, Godly sorrow and Humiliation for sin, causeth the Soul that is humbled, utterly to loath and abhor, and hate sin : Ezek. 20. 43. Ye shall remember your ways and your doings, wherein you have been defiled, and ye shall loath your selves in your own sight for all your evil that you have committed. Sin is odious and hateful to an humble Soul. I abhor every false way (saith David) Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law, Psal. 119. 73. 164. Nature may teach a man to loath sin in others, but 'tis only grace that teacheth us to abhor sin in our selves. When Judah, Gen. 34. 24. heard that his Daughter Thamar had played the Harlot, he presently cast sentence of Death upon her : Bring her forth (saith he) that she may be burned : But when he saw by the pledges that the sin was his own, Judah was then silent, no more talk of burning her then. A soul truly humbled will hate sin wheresoever it is, especially in his

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Wise men will fly from venomous and hurtful creatures wheresoever they are, especially if they be near them; because they are then in most danger to be hurt by them, all the sins of the world cannot do a Soul so much hurt as his own sin; then they that do not hate sin in themselves are not truly humbled for sin.

Thirdly, he that is truly humbled, is willing to take shame to himself; the humble Sinner is willing to be ashamed of his folly; Ezek. 16. 63. That thou mayest, remember and be ashamed, and never open thy mouth more, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.

Fourthly, a true humble Soul will be willing to receive the Word of God with all readiness: What is the reason men are no more humbled for sin? surely this, because they despise or neglect the good word of God, which is the only means to get humility: the humble penitent Soul is the most tractable and teachable Soul in the world, and he above all others is willing to embrace the word of God.

Fifthly, a true humble Soul is ready and willing to put in practice all those duties which he hath formerly learned out of the Word of God: When Paul was once truly humbled, he conferred no any longer with flesh and blood; but laying aside all carnal reasonings, goes on cho-

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rowly in his work of Preaching the Gospel : Gal. 1. 16. Thus you may see that where true Repentance is, there is also a true Humiliation and sorrow for sin ; then every one learn to be humbled, and that betimes ; for as women, the longer they are &c^e they bring forth Children, the harder is their labour : even so they that put off Repentance to old Age must expect the longer travail. Lamentably are they mistaken, who put off their Repentance to their old Age : is it likely that the pains and weakness of old Age will be any advantage or ease to thy Repentance ? Rev. 16. 19. its said, that at the pouring forth of the fourth Viol when God smote the Inhabitants of the Earth with a scorching heat, that they blasphemed the name of God and repented not. It is a woful thing to put off Repentance to a pained body or to a sick bed : pain in its own nature fit rather to blaspheme and turn from God, than to return to God, and its very common that sick persons either repent not at all, or if they do at the best their Repentance is but a sickly Repentance : sickness doth only abate and restrain the power of Mens Lusts ; it never destroys the life of sin, Death it self cannot kill sin ; wicked Mens sins live when they are dead, the grave cannot consume them, nor the fire of Hell ; the sin of unbelivers remain not only in their guilt, but in their power to all Eternity.

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Is it so then, that Repentance is a turning from sin unto God, then I obserue, That there can be no true Repentance where sin is delight-ful in: he that liues in the love and practice of any sin, knoweth not what Repentance meaneth; for Repentance takes off the Heart from the love of sin, and works it to such a dislike of sin, that it abhors the very occasion of sin; if sin comes and tells a gracious penitent Soul of the profits and pleasures of sin, O saith a gracious heart, the sweetness will prove bitterness in the latter end. True Repentance takes off the Heart from all sin, as well small as great, not from some few sins, but from all sin; for he that turns not from all, turns from none in truth; and it is not enough to turn from all sin, but we must turn from the commands of sin and Satan unto the commands of God; from Unholiness, to Heavenly-mindedness; from Pride to Humility; from Hatred and Envy to Love: the Tree that bears not good fruit will be hewn down and cast into the fire, as well as the Tree that bears no fruit. I beseech you therefore brethren in the bowels of mercy, for the Lords sake I entreat every one of you that desire to be saved, that you would turn away from all your Iniquities, and that speedily, lest your Repentance be too late: and to this end, be earnest with God by Prayer, for the assistance of his Spirit in the

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subduing of thy sins, and cast thy self wholly upon the Lord.

Every true Penitent is wholly the Lords, the desire of his Soul is to God, and to the remembrance of his Name: with his Soul he desires God in the night, and with his spirit waiteth in him: he seeketh the Lord in the Morning, Isa. 26. 8. 9. He is now a constant suitor at the Throne of Grace, and with full purpose of heart he cleaves to God, and loves the place where his Honour dwells, Psal. 26. 8. All his desire is to know more of God, and how he may love him more and serve him better; the service and servants of God, how joyful are they to his Soul. He takes all opportunities of doing good, he keeps his Heart with all diligence, and the door of his lips, that he offend not with his Tongue, Psal. 39. 1. His heart is so enamoured with the love of God, that he endeavours with all his might to shew forth the praises of the Lord. By which it appears, that a turning to God, is not barely a turning from sin, but a practising of good, and walking upright before the Lord in all well pleasing all our days.

Is it so then that Repentance is needful and absolutely necessary for all persons; in what a sad condition then are the greatest part of men and women in the world, who as yet are as far from true Repentance, as light is from darkness,

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and yet poor Soules; they smooth themselves up with this conceit, that God is merciful, and they hope to be saved as well as the best, and they thank God all is well with them; and yet notwithstanding they never repented of their sins: true repentance, is a grace almost out of fashion in these self-conceited times, wherein mens minds are so much running after nobilities and outward formalities, but the power of Holiness, and the Doctrine of repentance and self-mortification, these are not minded; nay by many are accounted Legal and altogether needless.

There are three sorts of people that I shall have occasion to speak of in the use of this Point: and the first are such as altogether abhor repentance; the second are such, as although they acknowledge Repentance is needful, and necessary for others, yet think that they themselves have no need of it; and the third sort are such as do confess, that Repentance is needful both for themselves as well as others, but not yet; its time enough hereafter, there's no such haste of it. And I hope in the handling of these three sorts of persons, I shall make it appear that Repentance is needful and necessary at all times for all sorts. Having done this, I shall remove some lets that hinder Men from Repentance, and so give you some few Motives to stir you up to repentance; and then to wind up all

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In a few Words of Application.

I begin with the first of these, those that abhor Repentance; and they are wilful Sinners, such as go on in sin, and make it even their trade to sin: wilful, desperate, and dissolute wretches, that laugh at Repentance, who declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not, Isaiah 3. 6. Who will not be brought to abandon their wicked ways; but go on still in Swearing and Cursing, Lying and Blaspheming, Whoredom, Drunkenness, and all Uncleanness, and that with greediness, as the Apostle saith, Who mock at Faith and Repentance, as those Scorners did in 2 Pet. 3. 4. These are they as St. Peter saith, 2 Pet. 2. That walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and count it pleasure to riot in the day time: whose eyes are full of Adultery, that cannot cease from sin: O but the latter end of these men is worse then their beginnings. How many wicked wretches are there, that live as if they had made a Covenant with Death and Hell, and were at an agreement with the Grave, who had rather hazard their Souls than leave their sins, who as if there were neither Heaven nor Hell, run on from one sin to another. Come (say they) we will fetch Wine and fill ourselves with strong drink, and to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant. But Isa. 56. 12. Woe unto them (saith the Prophet) they

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they have rewarded evil to themselves. How little do these men think that God will one day wound the hairy scald of such as go on in sin: and that tribulation and wrath, indignation and anguish shall be upon every Soul that doth evil. Rom. 2. 9. Let men slight Repentance never so much, a time will come when they shall repent, but that too late, even in Hell fire for ever. For sin must be repented of, if not on Earth, yet in Hell; and if you will not loath your Companions in sin here, you shall loath them in Hell hereafter, your pot Companions, and your harlot Companions shall loath one another in Hell: then these bloody wounds shall bleed which you have given your souls in the days of your solity and pride, and in times of your desperate Impieties, when nothing but wrath and horror of Conscience shall appear before you, then those sweet morsels of sin which have been as sweet as Honey to your lustful appetites, shall be vomited up, as the bitterest and loathsomest things in the World. Consider this all ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you, Psal. 50. 22. Be willing to forsake your sins, for sin and the Soul must part, or else Hell and the Soul shall meet together: The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God. Psal. 9. 17. O that you would seriously lay these things to heart, and now, even now in this your day, that

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that ye would know the things that belong
to your Everlasting peace. To day if you will
hear my voice (saith God in the 95 Psalm) harden
not your hearts. Slight not, scorn not, trifle
not the good Word of God, that invited you to re-
pentance, but break off your sins by Repentance,
and turn to God in Righteousness.

And now for the second sort, and they are
such as think they need no Repentance: and
they are such as are either morally civil, and be-
nevolent before men; or else formal and hypocriti-
cal professors, who seem to be and are not, who
profess God with their Lips, but deny him in
their Lives: & they have no need of Repentance,
they are no Drunkards, nor Swearers, nor such
like: God I thank thee (saith the proud Pharisee)
I am not as other men are, extortioners, un-
just, Luke 18. 11. These are such as profess God
and know much of the mind of God, and there-
fore have no need of Repentance, they are guilty
of no sins to repent of. But of these it may
be said as Peter said of Elymas the Sorcerer. Acts
13. 10. That they are full of subtilty, and En-
emies to all Righteousness, who never yet
knew what sin meant. For they that think they
have no sins left to repent of, is a clear argu-
ment that they never yet truly repented themselves
of any one sin at all, but that they are still in the
gall of bitterness, and in the bond of Iniquity:

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For Repentance is a continued act, and a Grace that must have its daily operation, as Faith and Love must continue, so must Repentance; when once the rocky heart of a Sinner is smitten by God, the water of Repentance will abundantly flow; sincere Repentants cannot content themselves with one act or two of Repentance, but they must daily renew their repentance; for sin will renew, so must repentance; renewed sins must have renewed repentance, till we have done sinning (and that will not be till we have done living) we must not have done repenting: if there be a leak in the Ship, the water must be pumpt out, else the Ship is in danger of sinking: we are leaking vessels all of us, yea the best of us sin leaks in daily, and is renewed daily, and there mu't be the pump of Repentance to carry it out daily, else our Souls will be in danger of sinking. And for the other sort who think they need Repentance, they are pure moral honest Men; who live in a course of civility, and take their penny to be as white as any others, these are as good as the best, and therefore have no need to be any better; they are not desperately wicked as many are; they are no Blasphemers, nor Drunkards, they go to Church and give every Man his due, and are loving to their Neighbours, and what need any more: Its true, these things are necessary, and are acquired in a Christian

Man

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Man; but yet civility without activity, at best is but gilded Atheism; morality and seeming virtues are but gilded sins and glittering abominations: the Lord seeth many a rotten base, stinking heart under a civil coat. If civility and morality would have served the turn, then the Pharisees would have gone to Heaven before any other: they were civilly honest, they were no swearers nor drunkards, they paid Tithes, and gave Alms, and prayed often; and carried themselves so exact in the World, that it was thought that if but two persons in the World should go to Heaven, a Scribe should be one, and a Pharisee the other. But what said Christ? Mat. 5. 20. Except your Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And yet their Righteousness far exceeded our Righteousness, of all our moral honest men; Let a man be never so honest in outward appearance, let his carriage and behaviour be never so specious and plausible in the sight of the World, let him be never so exact and just in his dealings with men, yet if he be not renewed in the spirit of the mind, he is never the better for this. If he be not a sanctified Christian, the word of Truth never as yet came home to his Soul in the power of it; he is still in the state of nature, and without God, and as far from Repentance and Salvation.

And

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And then there is a third sort of Impenitents, and they are such as are convicted of the necessity of Repentance, but they do not think it a time now to Repent: they believe they will repent, but all in good time, there's no halt of it yet, it will be time enough hereafter: at the hour of Death, when age and sickness is upon them; and they think it a thing of nothing to Repent; they can do it when they list, its done with a wet finger; there needs no more but to say, Lord have mercy upon me, when they are going out of the World, this is the general Disease with which most men are infected. But let such Men know, that it is a hard matter to Repent, and sin is very powerful; and if they do not seek to get it subdued in the strength of their days, it will be too hard for them at the last: for although Men grow weaker and weaker, yet sin grows stronger and stronger, and being as (we say) bred in the Bone, nursed up by us in our Youthful days, it will not easily be rooted out of the flesh. Can the Blackamore change his skin, or the Leopard his spots: Jer. 13. 23. No they cannot; no more can they that are accustomed to do evil, leave it when they list.

If Repentance be a thing so easy, how is it that many who sought after it could never obtain? How many are there that have roared
and

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and cried in the bitterness of their Souls, and the horror of their Conscience, that they could not repent. O that I could repent, O that my hard Heart would break in pieces! This hath been the cry of many. It is not in the power of Man to Repent when he pleases, both God giving space to Repent now it may be he will not do it too morrow: a Man by Nature as he is not of himself, so he hath no inclination of himself to Repentance. Repentance is a hard work, a circumcision of the Heart, and casting of sin out of the Soul, which indeed will make the Heart to bleed; which thing no natural Man is either willing or able to do. Mortifie (saith the Apostle, Col. 3. 5.) your Members which are upon Earth; which thing suits not with a natural man. Let no man then put off Repentance upon such foolish wicked thoughts as these, that Repentance is an easy work, which a Man may perform when he pleases, such sinful thoughts as these will deceive you. Thou that wilt not repent now thou mayest, when thou wouldst, it may be thou shalt not be permitted: you that will not repent when God gives space, how shall it may be when thou wouldst, deny it thee? because when it was offered to thee thou refusedst. Ezek. 24. 13. Because I would have purged thee; and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness saith the Lord.

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The longer men live in sin, the stronger will sin grow in them: he that will not leave sin when he is young, will hardly leave it when he is old: It is said of wicked Men, in Job 20. 11. Their bones are full of the sins of their Youth, which lye down with them in the dust. Not that Mens sinne are buried with them in their Graves, for then they might be happy, but that they continue with them till Death: yea after Death. Many a time and often hath the Lord stood at the doore of Mens Consciences, and knocked to come in, Revel. 3. 10. Behold I stand at the door and knock (saith Christ) I do not let God wait long, he hath waited a long time already to be gracious unto thee, Isa. 30. 18. Do not give the Devil the prime and strength of your days, and then think to serve God in your old age: You do not leave sin in this, but sin leaves you; you have not the strength and power to sin then as you have had, but still your Hearts are as bad as ever they were; thin put not off your Repentance till sickness comes. Happy, yea thrice happy is that Man, and blessed shall he be, that in the time of his Youth and Health furnishes his heart and Soul with comfort against the evil day; happy is that Soul who when Age and sickness comes, is so fitted for Death by Repentance, that when Death comes he hath nothing else to do but to dye. Be perswaded then to Repent betimes

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times, before we go hence and be no more seen, there is no time ours but the present time, we do not know whether we shall live another day, or the night: many that are in health one day, are brought to their Grave the next. Our life (saith St. James) is but a vapour that appeareth for a little time, Jam. 4. 14. We are no sooner born but we begin to dye. Put not your selves off from day to day, he that's unfit or unwilling to repent to day, will be so to morrow, therefore see the Lord while he may be found, 1 a. 57. There's a time when God will not be found, Prov. 1. 24. to ver. 30. saith God, Because I called and ye refused, and set at naught all my counsel and would none of my reproof; therefore will I laugh at your calamity, and will mock when your fear cometh; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall you call on me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but shall not find me; for they that hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord, therefore shall they eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with their own devices. There's a time when mercy may be had, but if we neglect that time, it will not be recovered again, though it be sought with tears; there is a time when with the wise virgins we may enter into the wedding, but if we miss that time, we may with the foolish ones see the doore shut against us, Mat. 25. Then may we know

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Knock and call, yea, cry Lord, Lord, open to us, but the Lord shall say unto us. I know you not. The old World had a long time of Repentance; a hundred and twenty years did Noah preach Repentance to them, and yet they repented not: but the Ninevites they had but a short time given them, but forty days, and yet they repented; they made the Day of Repentance whilst the Sun of Gods Patience shined upon them.

God is not bound to wait Mans leisure; the Soul is but a Tenant at will, and may suddenly be turned out of doors; and when you lie upon your sick Beds, the Lord may fill your Hearts with such fears as may make your Consciences altogether despair of mercy. God sent you his servants early and late, in season and out of season, to induce you to Repent, but you will repent you say hereafter, you will if you can, you say God will work it in you. What grounds have you of this hope? hath God made you any such promise? Thou canst not draw out the thread of thy Life one Minute, for ought thou knowest, this may be the last Day, the servants of Mercy, and the offers of Grace are at an end when thy Life ends, if not before: you know your time and tide waits no Mans leisure; therefore one is so wise as to take time and tide for worldly affairs; will any Man be so foolish as to defer the time of his saving till Pardee? When

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will not be carrying out of Dung, when they should be fetching in of Corn; no, they will dispatch those things first which are of most necessity. And is there any thing of more necessity than the salvation of your souls? will your souls be saved without Repentance? or can you repent when you will? But you will say, you are young, and therefore may be born with a while, which is the Devils Divinity; for young Men have more liberty allowed them to sin, or to put off Repentance, than old Men have, its the Devils policy to infuse this into thy brains, that he may ensnare thee. It was the commendation of Timothy, That from a Child he had known the Holy Scriptures, 1 Tim. i. Young Saints, say some, but not the word of God, probe old Devils: But I am sure it is a rare thing to see an old Sinner become a young Saint. When the Devil and sin hath loaded it in your Souls, yea, Tyrants both over Soul and Body for thirty or forty years together, do you think then that a little groaning or crying Lord have mercy upon me, will be able to dispossess him at the last, he having gotten us strong a footing in your Soul, to be beaten out of his quarters so easily: He that will not remember God when he is young and living, its greatly to be feared, God will be unmindful of him when he is old and dying. Therefore once more, I beseech you in the Bowels of Christ, speedily

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set about the work of Repentance, lest when it is too late you repent, weep and mourne, that you repented not before. Do not say of repentance, as Felix said to Paul, Thou wilt repent when thou art better at leasure, another time shall serue the turn; it may be thou mayest not live to another time. or if thou doest, thy heart may then be as hard, if not harder than now it is. Would you not in the day of the Lord be in a worse condition than Heathens or Infidels are? Then Repent. Would you not when you are dead be in a worse condition than Loads or Serpents? then Repent.

It may be said of every impenitent sinner, as Christ said of Judas, in the 29. of Matthew and the 24 verse. It had been better for that man if he had never been born. Heathens in the day of Judgment shall be in a better condition than impenitent Christians, for they shall have a lesser condemnation, because of their Ignorance; who it may be would have done better if they had known more. It shall be more tollerable (saith our Saviour) for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment, than for thee Capernaum: Thou England, that art exalted up to Heaven in Gospel-Mercies; take heed and beware lest thou be thrown down to Hell in Gospel-vengeance.

I would now shew you the lets that hin-

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her Men from Repentance; and so endeavours
 to remove them; but I shall only name
 them; and so conclude with some few
 words to stir you up to Repentance. Now
 the 1st is that keep Men off from Repentance,
 are either from Sin and Satan, or else from
 our Selves and the World; the Devil will
 swades Men that Repentance is a needless
 work, and Men need not trouble themselves with
 it; for those that God hath ordained to live, shall
 be saved, let them live never so loosely; and
 those that he hath appointed for Wrath shall be
 Damned, let them Repent never so much: But
 to remove this let out of the way, know this,
 That all those that God hath ordained to Salva-
 tion, shall first or last, more or less, be brought
 to embrace the Means. In the 13. of the
 Acts and the 48. As many as were ordained to
 Eternal Life believed. God hath joyned the end
 and the means together, and cased is he that
 dares to separate them: Salvation without Re-
 pentance is impossible; without holiness no man
 shall see God, Heb. 12. 14. A second way is
 which the Devil keeps Men off from Repentance,
 is Gods Mercy: God is merciful, saith the De-
 vil, his mercy is over all his works, and he will
 make you will not damn you; you need not fear
 it. True it is, even to wicked men, God is mer-
 ciful, but these are but mercies on the left hand,

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common mercies, it's a mercy to Men that they live; it's a mercy that we were not born Devils, and it's a mercy to have outward enjoyments, but what are those to the peculiar mercies of God? It was a good speech of a Godly Man, saith he, He that made thee without thee, will not save thee without thee; if thou art in a Ditch, and wilt do no more to come out but cry, God help me, thou mayst lye and perish. I do not dare to go on in this, because God is merciful: Shall we sin (saith St. Paul) that grace may abound? no God forbid. I dare not, saith a gracious Heart: if ever you would partake of mercy, you must depart from Iniquity, 2 Tim 2. 19. Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from Iniquity. I dare boldly say, that if all the Clouds of Heaven should continually shew down Mercy there should not so much as one drop fall upon any impudent person.

Truly, the Devil labours to keep Men off from Repentance, by bringing them to Despair of Mercy, if he cannot work men into presumption by the consideration of Gods mercies, he will do what he can to bring them into Desperation, by telling them, that Mercy is out of date. But let not this hinder thy Repentance, for it cannot be too soon to Repent, so it's never too late to Repent; better late than never. I do not speak this, that any should neglect to repent be-

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times but that none should ever despair of mercy, and thereby be hindered from this duty of repentance. A second let that hinders repentance is the world, the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life, the pleasures and preferments of the world, these fight against the spirit, and resist the work of repentance; Voluptuousness and Drunkenness unfits men for repentance, therefore these must be abstained from (1 Pet. 2. 11.) As things that war against the soul. Mortification therefore (saith the Apostle) your members which are upon earth, fornication, uncleanness, &c. Col. 3. 5, these must be mortified. And then a third let that keeps men from repentance is sin; sin hath such a commanding power over the souls of unregenerate persons. So that (as it is Rom. 6. 16) they give themselves over as servants to sin and to uncleanness. O then for the Lords sake, avoid all occasion of sin: Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof: neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield your selves unto God as instruments of righteousness, Rom. 6. 12, 13. O that I could prevaile with you, and that the Lord would persuade your hearts of the dreadful and doleful condition of all impenitent sinners. Consider then I beseech you in the fear of the Lord, these following

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Considerations; and first of all know this, **you** that live in the love of sin: you live in the hatred of God; for the love of God and the love of sin cannot possibly dwell together, and they that dwell in it, shall never dwell with God, Psal. 15: saith David, Lord who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? he that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness. And the Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 6. 9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revellers, nor extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God. And Psalm 97. Ye that love the Lord hate evil. Also 2 Tim. 2. 19. Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity. 2ly. All those that sin, or are under the power and command of sin, are of the Devil: For he that commits sin (saith St. John) is of the Devil, John 3. 9. And is't not a sad thing to be under the power of the Devil? every wicked man is the Devils slave, and he doth the Devils drudgery: where ever sin is in the love of it, there is also the Devil; he keeps court in wicked mens hearts. 3ly. Sin is the high way to Destruction, Is not destruction to the wicked, saith Job, Chap 31. 3. **Woe**, that it is, and a strange punishment to the work-

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ers of Iniquity. fourthly and lastly, sin brought wrath and Condemnation upon the Soul: If ye live after the flesh ye shall dye, Rom.8.13. The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God. Psal.9.17. These things being considered and seriously taken to Heart, no thinks should not only awaken Sinners out of their sleepe security, but also provoke them to Repentance. And then there is another let which hinders Men from Repentance, and that is in themselves, which is of all other the greatest let: he did not our base hearts deceive us, the Devil, the World, and Sin, could never hinder us from coming to God by Repentance, and these lets from our selves, are either from ignorance or hardness of Heart, Eph 4.18. Men, saith the Apostle, through the ignorance that is in them, and through the hardness of their hearts, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness, and to work all uncleanness with greediness. Ignorance must needs be a great let to Repentance, no wonder when men know not the danger of sin, nor the necessity of Repentance, that they live in sin, and never come to Repentance: who is there that seeks for that he knoweth not of. If impenitent sinners did but know what a dangerous condition they were in without Repentance, they would never suffer their eyes to sleep, nor their Eyes to grow dim, before they had made their peace with

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God by Repentance: O euen for the Lorde sake,
get acquaintance with God, and learn to know
what an odious thing sin is, Job 22. 21. Ac-
quaints now thy self with God, and be at peace,
thereby good shal come upon thee, thereby thou
mayest be brought to repentance. Then secondly,
there's hardness of Heart, which hinders in us the
work of repentance. Its said of Zedekiah, 2 Chron
36. 13, That he hardened his Heart that he
might not turn to the Lord his God. And this
hardness of heart is very lamentable, because all
the means which God uses to soften, work not
upon it at all, and Pharaoh hardened his Heart;
and would not let the Children of Israel go,
Ezek. 8. 32. All the sore judgments of God upon
him could not prevaile with his hard heart, he would
not let them go; so wicked Men whose hearts are
hardned, they will not let their sins go neither
the Judgment, nor the Mercies of God will
prevaile with wicked Men, to turn them from
their sins, Amos 4. 12. saith God, Though I
have sent among you judgment upon judgment,
plague, famine and noisom beasts, yet have you
not returned unto me. Therefore I beseech you, in
love to your poor Soul, that by prayer you would
beg of God to give you softened Hearts, that
may melt and tremble at the word of God, lest by
going on in your sins, ye bring upon your selves
swift destruction, And so I come to give you
some

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come in ans and mothers to sit you up to re-
pentance, and so I shall conclude.

The first and principal means of working Re-
pentance, where it is not, is the word of God.
Mat. 5. 17. And Jesus began to preach and to
say, Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at
hand. Christ's first Sermon was a Sermon of
Repentance, therefore if ever you would repent of
your sins, attend upon the Word of God. What
a woful sad condition are those in that want the
Word of God: What the Preacher said, Eccle.
11. 6. In the morning (saith he) sow thy seed, and
in the evening withhold not thy hand; so say
of hearing the word of God. Hear in the morn-
ing, and hear it in the afternoon? hear it on the
Lord's-day, and hear it in the Week day, take all
opportunities of hearing the word of God.

And then a second help is, to consider the
goodness and power of God, his almighty, and
his all-seeing Eye; consider God sees and knows
all thy Ways, and is able to punish thee, for
thy sins: if men were but convinced of this truth,
they durst not sin so boldly as they do. But I
pass by this to give you some few Evidences
of the truth of Repentance, and they are these.

First, the Soul that hath truly repented is
very careful to avoid then the occasion of sin,
keeps himself at a distance both from sin and

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first, he will disperse with no sin at all, but will say as Ephraim did, What have I to do any more with sin? And secondly, he that is truly turned from sin to God, will endeavour to turn others also; he is not content that he himself is turned to God, but he will draw others to God also. Thirdly, he that hath truly repented is very careful to furnish himself against the assaults of the Devil; The word (saith David, Ps. 119. 11.) have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. A true repentant treasures up the word of God in his heart, and walks worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, being fruitful unto every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, Col. 1. 10. They do it, as it is in Ps. 119. 23. They keep the testimonies of God, and seek him with their whole heart. They also do no iniquity, they walk in his ways. Their delight is in the law of God, and his law do they meditate day and night, Ps. 1. 2. Fourthly, he that hath truly repented, is full of holy indignation against sin, and turns sin quite out of doors, he cannot endure the sight of it. Fifthly, he that hath truly repented, is full of fear, he is filled with an awful, reverential, and filial fear of the Majesty of God, and he is afraid of displeasing God by sin. Sixthly, a true penitent is full of holy and heavenly desires, he desires more of God, and more acquaintance with the ways of God, more

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more communion with God in Ordinance.
Seventhly, true Penitents are very zealous
God: O How do I love thy Law, saith David
the 119. Psalm. A godly Man cannot en-
ter see God dishonoured, as it is said of Lot, the
second of Peter 2. 8. He vexed his righteous
soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.
And then lastly, where true repentance is wrought
it will work a holy change in the Soul;
whereas sin was formerly delighted in,
true Penitent hath it in Indignation;
will not only turn sin out of doors, but alle-
ready to cut it in pieces as it were: true pen-
itents have a feeling on their hearts for sin,
will loath themselves for the evil of their way.
It is a hard thing for a man to loath himself;
every man naturally loves himself, but true pen-
itents loath and abhor themselves, as Job 42.
A Repentant Eye sees matter enough in himself
of self-abhorrency: Repentance lets us see
black defiled Creatures we are by Nature. Eze-
20. 43. You shall remember your ways (saith
the Lord) and shall loath your selves in your
own sight. And so much for the Evidences of
Repentance.

Is it so then, that repentance is so absolute-
necessary to Salvation, and that there is a great
danger in putting it off from day to day; and
that a tickled repentance, is no repentance,

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Is not this a lively repentance? how highly then
is it concern thee one of us then to day,
while it is called to day, to begin our repentance,
not only to begin, but to persevere in it to
the end of our days. Let the time past of our
lives suffice us to have wrought our own wills,
and to have walked in our own ways; and let
us resolve for the time to come, to live unto
God, and be not weary, for in due season thou
shalt reap if thou sow not. Make Repentance
thy daily work, that so thy peace may be made with
God, and when thou comest to dye, thou mayest
have nothing else to do but to dye. He that labours
to kill sin by Repentance in his life, will be de-
lightful to dye when Death comes, Death is only
welcome to a gracious penitent Soul: they are
not fit to dye, in whom sin is not killed by repen-
tance; they have done nothing of that work which
God sent them into the World to do, they have not
repented: Repentance sweetens our lives, and
takes away the bitterness of Death, and only to pe-
nitent sinners is mercy promised. Consider there-
fore an absolute necessity of Repentance, we cannot
be saved except we repent; Except ye Repent,
(saith Christ) ye shall all likewise perish, Luke,
13. 3. Consider all thy life is but short; thou
hast but a little time to live in the World, thou hast
need to bestir thy self then, and to husband thy
time to the best advantage of thy Soul; thy pre-
cious

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cious & immortal Soul will be in danger
 fire, if thou repent not: for no Repentance no
 tion; and if thou dost not repent thee here
 ling, thou wilt surely to thy cost repent thee
 after in hell, for thy neglect of repentance;
 wilt then curse the day wherein thou didst
 repentance: then if there be any love in
 thy precious Soul, whatever thou dost, **Repent**
 Consider also the end for which Christ came
 the World, Mat. 9. 13. I came (saith Christ)
 call Sinners to Repentance. Be zealous
 fore and repent, and as John saith, Mat. 3.
 Let us all labour to bring forth fruit meet
 Repentance. Now the Lord work these
 upon your hearts, and the Lord giue euer
 of us Repentance unto life; Repentance
 to be repented of: Which the Lord of his
 infinite mercy grant unto us all. To whom be
 ry and honour for ever, Amen.



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